

Thomas Edison Explains Why He Expects to Vote for Woodrow Wilson

Although Lifelong Republican,
Edison Says Times are Too
Serious for Party Lines.

WILSON DISPOSED OF MANY BIG QUESTIONS

Edison Says, a Fool or a
Coward Would Have Had
United States in Trouble.

(By George Creel.)

While the republican party was in the throes of selecting a presidential nominee, Thomas A. Edison made modest announcement of his faith in Theodore Roosevelt as the one man fitted above all others for the job. Time went on, the Chicago steam roller ran over the Colonel as per plan and habit, the St. Louis convention renominated President Wilson and from the laboratory at West Orange came no comment of any kind whatsoever.

Now Mr. Thomas A. Edison, while cutting no large amount of ice with the master mechanics of the republican party, as they strove to make quite plain, is nevertheless a gentleman of some importance where the thought of the people of the United States is concerned. Not only is it the case that his life and his genius have been devoted to the happiness of humanity and the advancement of civilization, but certain Lincolnesque qualities have won him an enduring place in the popular heart. Along with their belief in him as a miracle worker, people have come to a great faith in his sturdy Americanism and his shrewd common sense.

As a consequence, Mr. Edison's post convention silence came to be the subject of somewhat excited speculation among those who sit around political campfires. What would he do, now that the Colonel had been rolled into cardboard thickness? Republicans and democrats, fully appreciative of the tremendous weight carried by the Edison opinions, worried a little, for even the relief of decisive action was denied them.

For Thomas A. Edison, as they know from years of experience, was not a man to be approached with arguments or cajolery. He forms his political opinions as painstakingly as he forms a model, he tests his convictions just as he tests an invention, and when he is satisfied that his position is as sound as his judgment can make it, then he announces his views for what they are worth.

Some weeks after the two conventions, I interviewed him on industrial preparedness, a movement to which he has been giving much of his time and thought. Talking in ideas, rather than in words, he outlined the inventory of America's industrial resources that is being made by 30,000 famous engineers, touched upon the myriad uses to which the national laboratory will be put by scientists, inventors and technicians, and drove home the truth that the one solid rock upon which national defense may be built is the readiness of factories and

skilled workers to turn to war production at a day's notice.

Something that he said gave very plain indication of his admiration of Woodrow Wilson, and out of my own ardent advocacy I took courage to ask him whether or not he had "made up his mind between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hughes."

"Not yet," he shook his head impatiently. "Wait until we see what this man Hughes has got to offer."

It was on the day of Mr. Hughes' final speech in California, the wind-up of his coast-to-coast campaign tour, that I received a telephone message from Mr. W. L. Saunders, the mining engineer.

"I happened to be talking with Mr. Edison yesterday," he said, "and he told me to tell you that he was willing to make that Wilson statement if you still wanted it."

I was at Mr. Saunders' office almost before the telephone receiver had ceased to echo. Here was a chance to make a campaign contribution worth more than money. We rode to Jersey through the Hudson tubes, and as we went, Mr. Saunders told me how he had worked beneath the river bed as far back as 1881, a young man on his first engineering job. A story of broken lives and broken fortunes, starting with Dolos Haskins, who first conceived the idea of a tunnel, continuing through foreign syndicates, and winding up with William G. McAdoo's success where others had failed.

He talked also of his work in Mexico, Europe and the Orient, the fight of America for the conquest of her natural resources, of the difference between legitimate business and "loaded dice" business, of the distinctions that must be made between enterprise and rapacity and as he talked it was plain that this man's support of Woodrow Wilson was based on no mere party affiliation, but had its sources in a tried and proved Americanism.

Mr. Edison, as a matter of course, was not in the office, but down in the shops. A boy went after him, and as we looked down the alley that ran between the factory buildings, the well known figure popped out of a far door. Bareheaded, in his shirt sleeves, he looked like nothing so much as a country storekeeper hurrying to fill an order for a pound of prunes.

Not until he came close enough to see his eyes and forehead, to catch the full effect of his dynamic force, was the impression dissipated. At a sort of half run he led the way into the laboratory, and sat down with the effect of wanting to get through a disagreeable job as quickly as might be.

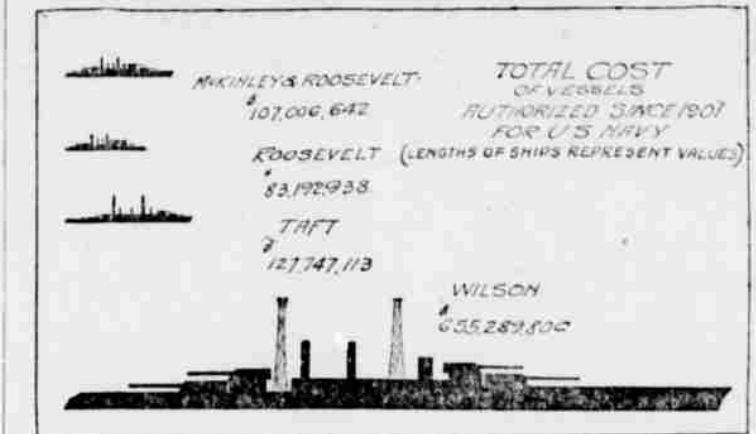
"Well, Mr. Edison," I began, withdrawing myself by an effort from fascinated contemplation of that big, dominant face and a necktie of the vintage of '76, "we—"

"—in a minute," he interrupted. Leaning back so as to gain ingress, he pushed his hand into his trousers pocket—the old-fashioned kind that open at the top, not the side—and drew out a bunch of crumpled yellow paper.

"There!" he said. "Everything's right there."

I smoothed them out—four or five sheets torn from a cheap tablet—all

Growth of U. S. Navy Under Last Four Administrations



This graphic representation of the growth of the U. S. Navy appears in the Democratic Text Book to be issued Sept. 2.

written over in pencil, the writing firm and curiously like old English print. Glancing through them, I saw that he had merely jotted down a number of flat statements of political belief.

"But what about a discussion of these issues, Mr. Edison?" I urged. "The people of the United States feel that you—"

"Shucks!" With his fingers he wiggled the compliment away from him. "I say that I'm for Woodrow Wilson. I say it because I feel that it's up to every man in times like these to take a position. But, pshaw!" He shook his head. "It's just my opinion."

"Mr. Edison has always been a republican," suggested Mr. Saunders, "and—"

"Don't put in anything about party," Mr. Edison caught the suggestion and dissented vigorously. "Times are too serious to talk in terms of republicanism or democracy. Parties are all right. Reckon we've got to have them with our system of government. But when it's America that's at stake, men have got to vote as Americans, and not as democrats or republicans."

"This man Wilson has had a mighty hard time of it," he continued. "I don't believe there was ever a president who had as many big questions to decide, as many big problems to solve. One has followed the other, and now and then they have come in bunches. He hasn't always pleased me, just as I suppose he hasn't always pleased other people, but when you look the record over, it's so good that criticism comes close to being nothing more than cheap fault finding."

"A fool or a coward would have had the United States in all sorts of trouble. As it is, we are at peace, the country was never more prosperous, and we have the strength that comes with honor and integrity of purpose."

"So you don't agree with these people who insist that the United States has earned the contempt of the world?" I asked.

"Bosh! Neutrality is a mighty trying policy, but back of it are international law, the rights of humanity and the whole future of civilization. Wilson has won victories by diplomacy that are far more important to mankind than any victories that we could have won by war. I am no pacifist. I believe that there are times when a nation has got to fight. But war for the sake of war, or war for purposes of conquest, is horrible and unthinkable."

"I imagine that Wilson wasn't very keen for preparedness at first. But when he saw that intelligent public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of it, and that our own safety demanded it, he set machinery to work that will give us a sound, sane, and adequate national defense. What if it was a change of mind. A president who refused to change his mind to meet changed conditions would be a dangerous man."

"You say here in your notes that it would have been neither wise nor right for the United States to have recognized Huerta?"

"Absolutely," Mr. Edison never gains emphasis by beating the cable with his fist. He depends almost entirely upon finger shaking. "A murderous personality. Had we recognized him, it would have served notice upon the world that the United States, while believing in democracy for home use was willing to stand for despotism where other peoples are concerned. It would have been a blow at constitutional government in every republic of South and Central America, stating to every scoundrel that all he had to do to win the approval of America was to assassinate a president."

"No, sir! President Wilson's Mexican policy has been wise and just and courageous. Mexico has been a troublesome neighbor, but war and conquest are not going to make her a better one. Both against England, and then against human slavery, the United States worked out her salvation through revolution, and it was a pretty long, trying process."

"Belgium!" suggested Mr. Saunders. "Hindsight!" exclaimed Mr. Edison. "Hindsight! In the light of two years it's easy to say what should have been done. But at the time not a single paper or a public man even

thought of anything but keeping the United States out of the European horror. At least a year went by before the world understood just what Belgium was being called upon to suffer."

He stopped abruptly, and began to towls his hair and fidget his feet. The shop was calling him. On the way over Mr. Saunders had told me an anecdote illustrative of Mr. Edison's absorption in his work. The iron and steel experts of the world were holding an international congress of some sort in the United States and one day was set aside for a visit to the great inventor and his laboratory. Mr. Edison had just perfected the phonograph, and the Englishmen, particularly, refused to believe it until they had seen it.

The party was eight hundred strong, and headed by a number of gentlemen in silk hats, they marched solemnly into the hall where Mr. Edison was supposed to be waiting. But the place was empty. Guided by an informal clamor, some of the American hosts entered a nearby room, and found the inventor on his knees watching an electric drill bite holes in a sheet of iron. While waiting, it developed, the invention had come from the back of his head to the front, and he had dashed away without another thought of the young army marching to honor him.

I seemed to see signs of this absorption in Mr. Edison at the moment, and inasmuch as we still had three precious minutes left us out of a ten-minute interview, I nudged Mr. Saunders. He came nobly to the scratch. "Tariff?" he said.

"There's another proof of Wilson's openness of mind," Mr. Edison declared, his interest instantly renewed. "No matter what he thought about the Underwood law, he had the courage to admit that the European war returned the tariff to the province of discussion. So he came to the front with his proposition for a tariff commission. That's sense. The tariff is a scientific affair, not political at all. A tariff commission will lift the whole business out of politics. It ought to be our hope that congress will give the body all the dignity of the supreme court, so that the president will be in a position to get famous experts for the work. Too many men in the public service already that private employment wouldn't pay a dollar to."

"Umph!" His exclamation was one of disgust. "Mighty picaresque to talk about when there are so many big things demanding attention. Reckon Wilson has had a good many poor appointments put over on him, but taken generally, the men he has put on guard measures up beyond the average. As I have watched him, he seems to want to keep away from the patronage squabble; and while this gives more power to the politician, it also gives us a president who's more than a mere patronage broker."

"As I said at the start," he continued, "it has just been one big thing after another with Wilson. I have never known so many dangerous questions brought up for decision to any one president. Look at the general railroad strike that piled up on top of Mexico and all the other things. Why, if carried through, such a strike would throw the whole country into confusion, and would prove a calamity that, in certain eventualities, would have disastrous results bound to extend over a long period of time. I think he rose to the occasion splendidly, just as he has risen to every other occasion that called for courage and wisdom, and is doing the best he can."

"In my opinion, Mr. Hughes, if president, would have found it difficult to decide on the best course for the government to take in such matters. His capacity for hindsight, as we learn from his speeches, is highly developed, but as to his foresight, we are not equally well informed."

Working all day and far into the night, as he does, the wonder is that he finds time to do any reading at all. And yet it is almost impossible to touch upon any current subject with which he is not familiar.

"They say Wilson has blundered," he raised both hands to drive home

his point. "Perhaps he has. But I notice that he usually blunders FORWARD."

He came to his feet then, but paused to say a few more words.

"You can't get 100 per cent efficiency in a democracy. I don't know that we ought to want it. We would be machines, and we would have to sacrifice too much of freedom."

He rocked on his heels for a second, and then, even as his hands reached out to take some papers from a secretary, he finished with this declaration:

"Mr. Wilson has now had about four years of experience, and I think that he has earned faith and trust. I do not think it a logical or sensible thing to change to an inexperienced and untried man just for the sake of change. Or without much better reasons being given for the change than any I have noticed."

"Roosevelt was my choice. He had had experience, and is one of the best Americans. But the machine-controlled republican party would not have him. Therefore I am for Woodrow Wilson."

School Notes.

Ardmore High school graduates of the class of 1916, who will attend school the coming year are: Wm. Ringer, post graduate course, Ardmore high school; Walter Colbert, Clemson agricultural college, North Carolina; Hobart Dorman, Washburn college, Topeka, Kans.; Volney Bodovitz and Miss Bessie Henry, University of Oklahoma; Misses Jewel Banks and Elizabeth Dyer, Central State Normal school, Edmond; Eugene Carls, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Miss Charlie Grunberg, Von Edna school of music, New York city.

Those of the class who will teach are: Messrs. Homer Carroll and Elton Carpenter and Misses Ford Barry, Orpha Cox, Stella Crosthwaite, Lurline Flock, Elva Pace, Lena Scott, Lola Williams and Dorothy Ensworth.

The following list comprises the High school teachers for the coming year:

C. H. Woodruff, A. B. University of Arkansas—principal, psychology and mathematics; Miss Grace Lee, A. M., University of Oklahoma—history; Miss Eleanor McPherson, A. B., A. and M. College, Stillwater—domestic economy; M. Taylor, A. B., Valparaiso University—assistant mathematics; Miss Helen DeBarr, A. B., University of Oklahoma—modern languages; Miss Lillian Bishop, A. B., Shurtliff, Indian—English; Miss Jewell Patchell, A. B., University of Oklahoma—Latin; Miss Nellie McPherson, A. B., University of Oklahoma—assistant English; W. H. Pleasant, A. B., Tennessee—manual training; H. H. Mead, B. S., Valparaiso, L. L. B. University of Michigan—athletics; Miss Ollie DePew, B. Com., Southern Business University, Bowling Green, Kentucky; Mrs. S. M. Davis—study hall teacher; Sol M. Lowenstein, B. director of orchestra; Miss Ella J. Peterson, Thomas Training school—vocal music; Carl Schaffer, A. B., Valparaiso University—science; Miss Daisy Nichols, St. Mary's Convent, Denison, Texas—visiting teacher.

High school students are urgently advised to enroll as early in the week of Sept. 11-15, as possible, since opportunity can better be given them at that time for a careful consideration of a course of study, order of recitations, etc. The principal's office will be open each afternoon from 1:30 until 3:30. All students must enroll not later than Friday, Sept. 15.

Many students from surrounding counties have already signified their intention of entering Ardmore high school for the coming year, either by transfer or by paying tuition. Smaller towns of the county are also furnishing many students this year. Some of these are ambitious young men who wish to secure employment assisting themselves through school. Anyone who can furnish such employment to deserving students should communicate at once with Supt. C. W. Richards or Principal C. H. Woodruff.

OSCAR ALEXANDER—A MONUMENT—SHALL IT BE ERECTED.

One day last week in speaking to a prominent citizen about the untimely and lamented death of brave young Alexander, the writer remarked: "I believe that a suitable monument should be erected at some public spot in this city as a visible token of our appreciation of the heroic act and also for its educational effect in the interest of a better and saner civic conscience." The other gentleman said, "Yes, and I will subscribe \$50.00 toward it." The writer asked a few others to pass judgment on the wisdom of the scheme. All endorsed it, with two exceptions. One volunteered \$25.00, another \$50.00, several small amounts. The matter has not been formally opened, nor have subscriptions been solicited.

The purpose of this article is to bring the matter before you, as good

MELONS GROWN BY W. B. EAGLE, THE WATER MELON KING OF OKLAHOMA



The above cut will give you a faint idea of the melon crop that can be produced in this section of Oklahoma. These melons were grown on the truck farm of W. B. Eagle who resides two miles west of this city.

A faint idea of what a small truck farm will produce is also added to the melon crop when it is recorded that he sold this season \$65.00 worth of spring onions, \$50.00 worth of early radishes, \$50.00 worth of early tomatoes, \$15 worth of roasting ears, \$25.00 worth of Irish potatoes. All this produce was sold to peddlers and dealers in Ardmore and vicinity at wholesale prices. He still has a fine crop of sweet potatoes coming on which at a fair estimate will make 250 bushels, two and one-half acres of turnips that should make at least 250 bushels which if kept until next spring should bring 75 cents to one dollar per bushel.

The greatest crop grown by Mr. Eagle is his watermelons. He has a fine fall crop of onions, beets, radishes and tomatoes.

law enforcement, we felt an interest in the above suggestion.

Friends, what think you of the enterprise?

If it is thought to be a wise suggestion, a competent committee will be selected to raise funds, select, inscribe, and locate the monument. If not, there is no harm done.

E. R. WELCH.

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